

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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TAGS: CI, US, PINS

SUBJECT: GOC PRESS OFFICE COMPLAINT

REF: SANTIAGO 3787; SANTIAGO 3801; SANTIAGO 3767

1. LT.COL. LEON RUIZ, CHIEF OF GOC INTERNATIONAL PRESS OFFICE, ASKED ACTING ASSISTANT INFORMATION OFFICER MICHAEL STEVENS TO COME TO HIS OFFICE THIS MORNING, JULY 30, IN ABSENCE OF IO, TO INFORM EMBASSY OF GOC DISPLEASURE WITH JULY 25 ARTICLE (NOT SEEN HERE) BY VISITING WASHINGTON "POST" CORRESPONDENT JOSEPH NOVITSKI AND WITH JULY 29 ARTICLE BY VISITING NEW YORK "TIMES" CORRESPONDENT JONATHAN KANDELL. (WE ASSUME LATTER REF IS TO JULY 27 ARTICLE TRANSMITTED BY USIA AS X-4.) DATES ARE THOSE GIVEN BY RUIZ.

2. RUIZ BEGAN BY STATING THAT GOC HAD FINISHED PREPARING NEW SIX-MONTH PRESS CREDENTIALS FOR VISITING FOREIGN PRESS, WHICH WILL ELIMINATE NEED OF ACCREDITED VISITING CORRESPONDENTS TO APPLY FOR NEW CREDENTIALS EACH VISIT. HE STATED THAT ALL CORRESPONDENTS, INCLUDING NOVITSKI AND KANDELL, WHO WERE ON LIST OF US REGULARLY VISITING CORRESPONDENTS SUPPLIED TO HIS OFFICE BY USIS FOR PRESS ACCREDITATION, HAVE HAD CREDENTIALS PREPARED

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FOR THEM. RUIZ THEN CHARGED THAT NOVITSKI AND KANDELL

HAD SPREAD UNTRUTHS ABOUT CHILE IN ABOVE DISPATCHES AND WERE NOT "OBJECTIVE" JOURNALISTS. HE INSISTED THAT THE SITUATION BOILED DOWN TO ONE OF "THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE" ("COSAS QUE NO PUEDEN SER"). HE ADDED THAT HIS SUPERIORS "UPSTAIRS" WERE INDIGNANT ABOUT INTERNATIONAL PRESS FALSEHOODS ABOUT CHILE AND WANT SOMETHING DONE, MENTIONING AS AN EXAMPLE RECENT CASE OF UNNAMED MEXICAN JOURNALIST WHO WAS HOUSEGUEST OF GOC MINISTER BUT WAS UNGRATEFUL ENOUGH TO WRITE HOSTILE ARTICLE UPON RETURN TO MEXICO.

3. RUIZ THEN READ EXCERPTS FROM NOVITSKI'S ARTICLE, POINTING OUT VARIOUS PARTS UNDERLINED IN RED WHICH HE MAINTAINED WERE INACCURATE. RUIZ CHARACTERIZED NOVITSKI ALLEGATION THAT GOC AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY ARE MOVING TOWARD A BREAK AS UNTRUE SINCE ALL POLITICAL PARTIES ARE IN "RECESS" AND SO GOC COULD NOT HAVE DEALINGS WITH CD ANYWAY FROM WHICH TO BREAK OFF. ALSO CITED PRESENCE OF CD PARTY MEMBER RAUL SAEZ IN CABINET AS FURTHER PROOF. RUIZ DISAPPROVED OF NOVITSKI SPECULATION THAT RISE OF PINOCHET TO PRE-EMINENCE IN GOVERNING JUNTA MAY BE SIGN OF INCREASED MODERATING INFLUENCE BY ARMY IN GOC POLICY. RUIZ STATED THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY ARMED FORCES AS DIFFERING AMONG THEMSELVES WITH RESPECT TO GOC POLICY WAS FALSE. RUIZ ALSO FELT THAT NOVITSKI DISTORTED TRUTH BY USING WORD "REPRESSION," INSISTING THAT TRANQUILITY WHICH CAN BE SEEN IN THE STREETS OF SANTIAGO DEMONSTRATES THAT THERE IS NO REPRESSION IN CHILE. RUIZ EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT IN NOVITSKI, STATING THAT HE EXPECTED BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND MORE TRUTHFULNESS FROM A FORMER NAVY MAN (A REFERENCE TO NOVITSKI'S US MILITARY SERVICE).

4. WITH RESPECT TO KANDELL, RUIZ STATED THAT HIS OFFICE WAS LOOKING FOR HIM, TRYING EVERYWHERE POSSIBLE TO REACH HIM. HE ASKED STEVENS IF KANDELL WAS STILL IN CHILE, AND STEVENS REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW. RUIZ PROCEEDED TO OBJECT TO KANDELL'S REPORTING OF STATUS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN CHILE. RUIZ STATED THAT UNTRUTHFUL SLANT OF WHOLE ARTICLE POINTED TO KANDELL BEING A "MARXIST" AND NOT AN OBJECTIVE JOURNALIST. RUIZ TOOK ISSUE WITH SEVERAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POINTS IN ARTICLE, INCLUDING REFERENCE TO ALLENDE OVERTHROW AS A "VIOLENT MILITARY COUP," STATING THAT IT WAS NOT VIOLENT WHEN COMPARED TO SIMILAR OCCURRENCES IN PRACTICALLY ANY OTHER COUNTRY WHICH HAS EXPERIENCED SUCH A CHANGE.

5. RUIZ STATED THAT GOC HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHAT ACTION IT WILL UNDERTAKE TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM OF INACCURACIES AND UNTRUTHS OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS, BUT IMPLIED

THAT EMBASSY SHOULD NOT RECOMMEND FOR PRESS
CREDENTIALS CORRESPONDENTS WHO ARE NOT "OBJECTIVE"
IN THEIR REPORTING. STEVENS STATED THAT BOTH NOVITSKI
AND KANDELL WERE EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL REPORTERS
REPRESENTING TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT US NEWSPAPERS
AND THAT THEY WERE INCLUDED IN EMBASSY LIST OF
CORRESPONDENTS FOR SIX-MONTH PRESS CREDENTIALS
AS MATTER OF COURSE.

6. COMMENT: TO OUR KNOWLEDGE BOTH NOVITSKI AND KANDELL
HAVE LEFT CHILE, BUT RUIZ' ATTITUDE DOES NOT BODE WELL
FOR POSSIBILITY OF THEIR BEING ALLOWED TO RETURN. EMBASSY
INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY POINT OUT TO GOC
DANGERS OF TRYING TO LIMIT REPORTING CHILEAN SCENE BY EXPERIENCED
AMERICAN REPORTERS MERELY ON GROUND IT DOES NOT AGREE WITH
THEIR OPINIONS.
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